**T04D03 - Rules for Writing Lewis Structures**

1. **Sum** the valence electrons for all the atoms.
2. Draw a **skeleton** structure for the species (molecule or ion), joining atoms by single bonds. Each bond consists of two electrons.
3. **Most** skeleton structures will consist of a central atom bonded to two or more terminal atoms.

**Notable exceptions will be compounds consisting of two or more carbon atoms**. Carbon atoms will be arranged in chains (usually for us) or cyclical (infrequently for us) units joined by a single bond (or possibly a double or triple bond if needed).

1. The central atom will generally be the least electronegative element. Terminal atoms will generally be oxygen, the halogens, and hydrogen.

1. Arrange the remaining electrons around the terminal and central atom to satisfy the duet rule for hydrogen and the octet rule for the remaining elements.

**Examples:**

PH3 CHCl3

C3H8 C3H6